

Messenger of Peace.

"GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN."

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No. 14.

EXCOMMUNICATION.

OF

DEACON JAMES GREEN.

The above named gentleman, it appears, has been for some years under the influence of the LEAVEN of the doctrine of Universal Benevolence, for as early as the spring of 1817, the Elder, JUSTUS HULL, found it necessary to attempt to convince the deacon of the error of his ways. This he did by letter, and being desirous that others, as well as the deacon should be benefitted by his ABLE EXPOSURE of Universalism, he, very generously, had his letter published in a paper printed in Troy, N. Y. called the Troy Budget, in June, 1817. This letter has been sent to us, accompanied with a request that we should publish it in the Messenger and make such reply as would convince the Elder, that instead of EXPOSING UNIVERSALISM, he has *exposed*, not only his own ignorance of the doctrine, but also shown his entire ignorance of the character of God as laid down in the Bible. Desirous of having our remarks accompany the letter, and as an exposure of all the absurdities contained in it, will be too much for one number of our small paper, we shall divide the letter and our remarks, and have them occupy two numbers.

UNIVERSALISM EXPOSED.

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

Dear Sir,

With the advocates of Universalism it is an essential argument, that the punishment of the wicked in a future state, is merely disciplinary, and not vindictive, that is, designated for the sinner's good, to bring him to repentance and not for the purpose of asserting the rights of the divine government. As upon the truth or falsehood of this sentiment, rest the fate of Universalism; it is the object of this letter to discover its absurdity by the light of Revelation.

1st. That the future punishment of the wicked is not disciplinary, appears from the unequivocal declaration of sacred writ. Those who die in a state of impenitency are said to be lost—cast away—that they shall utterly perish; that they go into perdition, into everlasting punishment; hence "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul," Mark ii. 36. "They shall utterly perish in their own corruption," 2 Peter ii. 13. "We are not of them who draw back to perdition," Heb. x. 39. "The day and perdition of ungodly men," 2 Peter iii. 7. "Fear him who is able to destroy (or punish)

both soul and body in hell," Mat. x. 28. "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power," 2 Thes. i. 9. "What truth or propriety can there be in these passages of scripture, if no more is intended than a fatherly chastisement—a wholesome discipline, intended to promote the best interests of the subjects. The damned in hell are, (according to this doctrine) no more lost, cast away, destroyed, than saints are, while in this world lost, cast away or destroyed. But it is argued, that the damned are under discipline; so are the most virtuous and holy while in this probationary state: yet they are never said to be lost, cast away, destroyed, nor rejected as reprobate silver; but are on the contrary, said to be kept—preserved as the apple of his eye. Hence, "If they break my statutes and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail," Psalm, lxxxix. 21, 33, again, "All things work together for good, to them that love God," Rom. viii. 28. Further, St. Paul says, "Our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," 2 Cor. iv. 17. How different this from the language uttered concerning the wicked, under their discipline, as it is called) while in hell. Yet agreeably to the doctrine of Universal restoration, both are alike intended to express an emancipation from evil and introduction of the ungodly as well as the righteous into a state of immortal bliss. Why inspiration ever explicit, should vary its language in addressing the wicked and the righteous so as to denounce against the first, the most tremendous woes and promise to the latter the greatest blessings, unless these opposite results were really intended, will I think remain a question too difficult for the ablest Universalist to solve; unless like the first propagator of the doctrine, enveloped in the blaze of gospel light, he ventures to affirm, "Ye shall not surely die."

2d. As the means of grace under which (according to the doctrine of final restoration,) the damned in hell are placed, are as much calculated to promote and secure their greatest good, as any means under which in this life, the righteous are placed, how contrary to common sense is it, to speak of them as lost. The afflictions of the righteous are intended to advance their sanctification, hence they rejoice in tribulation and instead of being lost, they

joyfully anticipate victory over every foe, and the ultimate possession of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away.

Imagine, a man laboring under the pressure of disease; a variety of means are employed to effect his recovery, but all in vain, finally an infallible remedy is discovered, a remedy which will absolutely effect his restoration; I ask, would it accord with common sense, to say, under such circumstances—he is lost, cast away, destroyed, especially, if to pursue the simile, he is, after his restoration to become the possessor of a kingdom that can never, never be destroyed. So far from wailing and gnashing his teeth, Math. viii. 12, he ought with an apostle exultingly to exclaim, 'I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us,' Rom. viii. 18.—And while tossing on the billows of the lake, he might rejoice in the beams of mercy that illumin'd the distant horizon. But the premises are false and such too must be the inference.

REMARKS.

The Elder commences by stating, that 'with the advocates of Universalism it is an *essential argument*, that the punishment of the wicked in a future state, is merely disciplinary and not *VINDICTIVE*, that is, *designated* (or rather *design*) for the sinners good, to bring him to repentance, and not for the purpose of asserting the rights of the divine government.'—'Upon the truth or falsehood of this sentiment, the Elder says, and with much propriety, rests the fate of Universalism—Yes, kind reader, we acknowledge the fact, that if it can be proved that punishment, inflicted by the righteous hand of the eternal God, is not designed for the good of the sinner, but altogether vindictive or out of *revenge*, then indeed will Universalism fall to the ground. But before we believe this horrible doctrine, we must have proof, clear, unequivocal and positive proof, that defies the power of argument to produce the least possible room for doubt.

The Elder contends that punishment is not *disciplinary*, that it is not intended for the good of the punished, but that it is *vindictive*. We must beg leave to present our readers with the definition of this word, *vindictive*. We do it, that the absurdity of Elder's views on this subject may the more clearly be seen. By *vindictive* is meant *REVENGEFUL*. Now can it be possible that the dear man believes that God is a revengeful being and punishes his creatures merely out of *revenge*. Is such a spirit attributed to the Almighty any where in the scriptures? Surely not. So far from this, the scriptures declare that God is *LOVE*. That with him there is no variableness or shadow of turning. It is believed by christians, generally, that all the properties or attributes of the divine nature are infinite. Infinite and unchangeable love cannot degenerate into the

base passion of revenge or cease to seek the good of the objects of its power. God must have some object in view, some design in punishing. This design must either be *good* or *evil*. It must either be *benevolent* or *malevolent*. The Elder surely would not understandingly attribute either an evil or malevolent intention in the Deity in punishing his own offspring. Yet he has done this in the declaration he has made, that God does not punish for the good of the sinner punished, but out of *revenge*. If Elder Hull is a father, we would ask him, if he is willing to acknowledge that governed by the spirit of God and under the influence of redeeming love he has punished his children without any design to produce a reformation but merely out of *revenge*. Would he be willing to have it industriously circulated through Rensselaer county, that Elder Justus Hull had become so enraged with a portion of his children that he had lost all affection for them; had no longer any desire to do them good; that he had no design that the punishment, he inflicted, should in any degree be of service in bringing them to serious reflection on the impropriety of their conduct, and induce them to reform, but that from a vindictive spirit of revenge he most unmercifully and cruelly punished them and would thus punish them as long as he lived? We will venture to say, that the Elder would not be willing to acknowledge that he so dealt with his children, neither would he be willing that such a report should be put in circulation concerning him. He would think, and justly so, that it was an impeachment of his character as a christian as well as a father, as it would charge him with possessing a spirit more allied to the evil one, than to that holy and just God, who is a lover of souls, and the Redeemer of men. Yet such is the character that the Elder himself gives to the Father of spirits, and which he industriously labors to fix on the minds of the children of men, endeavoring to persuade them that that God, who is styled in the scriptures the Father of Mercies and God of all comfort and consolation, will inflict out of *REVENGE*, cruel and unmerciful punishment upon his dependent and helpless offspring.

The Elder attempts to prove that the future punishment (that is, punishment in another state of existence) of the wicked is not disciplinary, by making a few assertions resting on his bare word, and selecting a few scraps of scripture which he has detached from their proper subjects and applied to that to which they bear no relation. It was the Elder's duty to prove that punishment would be carried into another world, before he attempted to prove that it was not disciplinary but *REVENGEFUL*. If he knew any thing of the sentiments of Universalists, he must be aware that a large portion of them do not believe that men are punished in another state of existence for what they do in this; they do not,

in their opinion, find the doctrine in the Bible, and feel unwilling to believe it without divine authority. On a point of so much consequence to the human race, we ought to be well convinced of the reality of punishment in another state; no trifling consideration ought to bias our minds in its favor; we ought to have the most positive and irrefragible evidence in proof of it. Until ample proof is brought that men will be punished in another world, it is useless and idle to be troubling ourselves whether it is disciplinary or revengeful; limited in its duration or endless.

The Elder, having his mind fixed upon damnation, or punishment in hell in another world, seems to have lost himself entirely and fighteth as one that beateth the air, laboring to refute sentiments which were never believed by Universalists. They do not believe that punishment saves men, or is productive of repentance, any farther than punishment, that is misery the consequence of sin, awakens man to a consideration of the causes which lead to that state of wretchedness and induces the transgressor seriously to reflect on the error of his ways. It is the goodness of God that leads to repentance, and the manifestations of the love of God that causes the sinner to love God. "We," saith the apostle, "love him because he first loved us." The opposers of the doctrine of Universal benevolence, and it is probable Elder Hull among the rest, contend, that if we take away the fear of future punishment, there would be no incentive to virtue, therefore, it is absolutely necessary that the penalty of the law should be held up to view to deter men from the commission of crime, and that this fear is necessary to bring men to seek after God, and to desire his saving mercy, crying out, "Lord what shall I do, to be saved." But would the Elder or those who make this declaration think we did them justice, in saying, that the fear of hell, that is endless misery in another world, was the grace that led to repentance and saved man from sin. However necessary they consider the preaching of endless damnation to arouse and awaken the sinner to a sense of his lost situation, and that it often begins the work which is finished and perfected by the love or grace of God; still they would feel themselves injured, and misrepresented were we to say that they believed that the fear of endless torment was the grace which possessed a converting or regenerating power, and was the only means of salvation employed to deliver man from sin. Why then does the Elder hold up the idea embraced by Universalists, that punishment is disciplinary and designed for the good of the punished, as absurd and inconsistent, and represent them as believing that punishment is the grace that leads to repentance, and the means employed to save men from death. Why is it not as reasonable to believe that misery, the punishment of sin, may arrest the progress of the transgressor, and arouse and awaken him to a sense

of his condition, induce him to reflect on the cause of his present situation, and incline him to listen to the voice of wisdom, as that the fear of punishment in another world is necessary to effect this purpose. That the fear of endless punishment is necessary to awaken the sinner and to cause him to cry out "what shall I do to be saved," is the belief of the Elder there is no doubt, and it is altogether probable that he has often said, what thousands of others have often declared, that if they believed there were no punishment in another world, but that all mankind would be saved, and received into a state of never ending peace and joy, they would not care what they did in this world; they would give loose to every base passion, and pay no attention to the concerns of religion; and it may be, that in this temper of mind and state of feeling the Elder has expressed his surprise that the believer in Universal Salvation should trouble himself about, even, the external forms of religion, and be at the expence of building churches and supporting ministers. This shows how necessary the fear of eternal damnation is considered to keep men in the way of holiness, or rather to bring them into that way, nay, we will say, keep them in that way, for it is frequently declared by men who profess to have tasted and seen that the Lord is good, to have been born again, and to know the way of holiness, that if you take away the fear of endless torture you take away all restraint and every incentive to virtue, and that man, delivered from the apprehensions of eternal misery, will pay no attention whatever to that which is holy, just and good. If then the fear of future punishment produces such wonderful effects why not the reality produce the same consequences. Surely if the fearful apprehensions of pain and misery produce certain effects, the actual suffering must produce the same in a greater degree, and there is no more impropriety or inconsistency in the Universalist believing, that actual suffering will lead men to reflection, and arrest the progress of transgression, than the belief that the fear of that punishment is necessary to produce the same effects.

To notice the several detached portions, or rather scraps of scripture, which the Elder has huddled together in proof that punishment is not disciplinary but vindictive, or REVENGEFUL, and explain them according to their true import and meaning would exceed the limits of our paper and extend our remarks to a length that would be tedious to our readers. We will only say, that the Elder, trusting to early impressions, and the current opinion that certain passages meant thus and so, taking it for granted that such and such was the true import and meaning of those passages; considers them as giving support to his peculiar opinions and uses them accordingly. Some of these passages we shall endeavor to notice and explain in the future numbers of the Messenger, for the present, we can only say that these texts

may be very differently explained to the satisfaction of every candid and rational mind; and some few it will be necessary to notice in our remarks on the letter of ex-communication.

It is our duty, to consider Elder Hull as an honest and an upright man who would not wilfully and intentionally violate the divine word and teach sentiments contrary to the most plain declarations of scripture. While yielding to this imperious duty, we are however, under the necessity of considering the Elder ignorant of the scriptures; for were he not, he must certainly as an honest man have recollected those declarations which expressly inform us that punishment is disciplinary and designed for the good of the offender, and he would have paid some attention to testimony so positive in establishing that point. Paul to the Hebrews xii. 8, &c. says, "But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers then are ye bastards and not sons. We have had fathers after the flesh, who corrected us and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of our spirits and live? for they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them which are exercised thereby." Again Psalm lxxxix. 30, &c. "If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgements; if they break my statutes and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes. Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips." Lamentations iii. 31, &c. "For the Lord will not cast off forever. But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." Proverbs iii. 11, 12. "My son despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." These passages are sufficient to prove, that punishment is corrective and designed for the good of the punished. It is inflicted in parental love. The affections which a father has for his child, induces him to chastise his son when disobedient. God afflicteth not willingly, nor grieveth the children of men. It is for their good he afflicteth, and though no chastening seemeth joyous but grievous. Nevertheless, afterward it worketh the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby. God has declared by his prophet that he will not cast off forever. Elder Hull says the Lord will cast off forever. Here the Elder and our Father in heaven are at issue, one contradicts the other. The Lord

declares that he does not *afflict willingly*. The Elder says that God does afflict in a spirit of *vindictiveness* or REVENGE. The Lord hath said, that though he cause grief yet will he have compassion according to the MULTITUDE of HIS MERCIES. But Elder Hull says that God does not afflict with any design that the afflicted should be benefitted by the chastisement, and that he never will have any mercy upon them, but will pursue them, in revenge, with fury and wrath through the wastless ages of eternity. We leave the Elder to settle this controversy with his God, and rest fully persuaded that every rational and reflecting mind will receive the testimony of truth, and prefer the word of God to the declarations of men, however pious and godly they may appear, and will be disposed to trust in the multitude of the mercies of their heavenly Father, rather than in the dogmas and absurdities of men who represent the Almighty Jehovah, the God of Love, unmerciful and vindictive.

To be continued

LETTER OF EXCOMMUNICATION.

Dear Sir, You are excluded the fellowship of this church for holding and advocating what we call heretical principles. We proceeded agreeable to St. Paul's directions to Titus, 3d, and 10th, where he says, an heretic after the first and second admonition, reject." Now the learned Mr. Bailey, in his English Dictionary, says, the meaning of the word heresy, is an opinion contrary to the fundamental points of religion, or to the holy scriptures; and your heresy consists, as we think, in holding sentiments contrary to those scriptures which so fully prove future punishment, (viz.) Mark iii, 29, but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation. 2, Thes. i. 9, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power. Luke, 16th chapter, where it is evident beyond a doubt, that the rich man was in torment after death, which if true, we think, at once destroys your plan. And in Rev 21st and 22d chapters, there the apostle describes the whole human family and divides them in two bodies. All the saints which compose the new Jerusalem, whose tears are to be wiped away, and they are to have no more pain, sorrow nor death; but without, are the fearful, the unbelieving, the abominable, &c. whose names are not written in the book of life;—these were to be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death. And then, lest some might think this would not be the closing scene, or rather the state of man at the closing scene, he adds;—He that is unjust let him be unjust still, and he that is filthy let him be filthy still, and he that is righteous let him be righteous still, and he that is holy let him be holy still. And thus closes the last account which we have of man in this world; Even so come Lord Jesus.—Amen.

We therefore, as a church, desire you would no longer advocate the doctrine which the enemy taught our first parents in the garden, (viz.) That they should not die, though they did eat the forbidden fruit—no doubt they were as confident they were right, that the doctrine was true, as you are, that there will be no future punishment for the wicked, and we have no doubt you will be as awfully disappointed as they were, though we hope not as fatal to you, as it was to them.

Signed by order of the Church,
JUSTUS HULL, *Elder.*

Berlin, Aug. 12, 1822.

N. B. We have both acted, and written, in the simplicity of our souls, as we judge duty dictated, hoping that it may be received with the same sincerity of heart.

To Deacon J. Green.

REMARKS.

In the foregoing letter, Deacon Green is informed that he is excluded from the church, not for any immoral conduct, nor for any breach of any covenant duty or obligation, but for holding to what the church is pleased to call Heretical principles. What are those heretical principles which the Deacon is charged with holding that renders him deserving of exclusion from a christian church? Answer, He does not believe that cruel unmerciful punishment will be endlessly inflicted upon a portion of the offspring of God, but cherishes the blessed hope that he with the whole family of man, will in God's due time be cleansed and purified from all sin, and made holy and happy in the righteousness of God. For this, & for this alone, has Deacon Green been excommunicated.

The writer of this letter, Elder Hull, says, "we proceeded agreeable to St. Paul's directions to Titus 3, 10. A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject." He appeals to Bailey for the definition of the word heretic. "The learned Mr. Bailey," says he, "in his English Dictionary says, the meaning of the word heresy is an opinion contrary to the fundamental principles of religion, or to the holy scriptures." Not having Mr. Bailey's Dictionary at hand we are unable to say that the Elder is correct, but we presume he is—Walker, Johnson, and others however define the word differently, and say that "heresy is the setting up of private opinion contrary to the belief of the orthodox church." If these gentlemen, no less learned than Mr. Bailey, are correct, it was the duty of the Elder and his brethren, composing the church in Berlin, to prove they were the true orthodox church, and that all other churches are heterodox, before they proceeded to excommunicate Deacon Green. The Elder must be well aware, that unless he can prove the above fact he and his church are as likely to be heretics as the Deacon, and he must be sensible that the Romish Church, and some others we might mention, consider Baptists to be as great heretics as he considers universalists, and with as much pro-

priety, as he can call Mr. G. an heretic. Allowing the Elder's definition of the word *heresy*, to be correct, (viz.) "an opinion contrary to the fundamental points of Religion" we request him, or any other believer in endless misery to prove to us that a belief, in future interminable punishment, is a fundamental point in the christian religion, and that a man who does not believe that God will punish some of the souls which he has made through the wasteful ages of eternity, is an heretic deserving excommunication from the church on earth, and eternal exclusion from the glories of heaven. We have searched the scriptures, but searched in vain, to find this essential, or fundamental point in the christian religion. We cannot learn that the Redeemer of the world, or any of the apostles, ever required their proselytes or followers, to believe in eternal damnation. When Philip and the Eunuch were conversing together on the christian religion, and carefully examining the writings of the Prophet Isaiah, the Eunuch, with a heart warmed with an holy affection produced by the preaching of Philip, made the inquiry, "Here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Immediately upon this, Philip baptized the Eunuch. If a belief in endless misery is a fundamental point in the christian religion, why did not Philip make the necessary inquiry of the Eunuch, whether he believed this fundamental point, and not run the risk of baptizing an heretic. Would Elder Hull baptize a person who did not believe in endless misery, would the simple acknowledgement of a belief in Christ, be sufficient evidence with him that the candidate for baptism was a christian, and would he go into the water with him? We believe not. Is the Elder then, more orthodox than Philip was, and does he understand the fundamental points of religion better than Philip did? It appears so. For we must believe, either that Philip did not consider a belief in endless misery at all necessary, or that he was very wickedly remiss in his duty and destitute of that love and regard for immortal souls, which modern divines profess to have. We cannot believe the latter, and therefore, we are compelled to believe that Philip did not consider a belief in endless torture as a fundamental point in religion. In this he is supported by the beloved disciple John, See 1 John iv. 15. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." Here then we find that he who shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God is a christian, and that God dwelleth in him, and he in God. Does Elder Hull believe this? If so why excommunicate Deacon Green. The Deacon believes that Jesus is the Son of God, and confesses it before God and man. God therefore, according to the Apostle, "dwelleth in him, and he in God." How then can he be a here-

tic, when God dwelleth in him and he in God. When Peter acknowledged Jesus to be the Christ the Son of the living God. Jesus said unto him "blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." That is, this confession of faith in me, Peter, which you have now made is the rock on which I will build my church. Flesh and blood hath not revealed this truth to thee but my Father which is in heaven. He therefore, who confesses that I am the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God.

It has been too much the case with us frail worms of the dust, that we have set up our own opinions and traditions as the standard of truth and christened our dogmas with the name ORTHODOXY, and have presumed to brand those who differed from us in religious opinions with the name of HERETIC. The house of Israel, although they had made void the law of God by their traditions, and were so completely blinded as to reject him of whom all their prophets had written, as the Messiah and Saviour of the world, considered themselves as orthodox and called the doctrine taught by Jesus and his apostles HERESY. Paul when brought before Felix, for preaching the gospel makes the following declaration—"But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call HERESY, so worship I, the God of my Fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the Prophets," Acts xxiv. 14. In the eye of the Pharisee, Paul was an heretic, and why? because he believed a different doctrine, and had other views of the divine character and government than the Pharisee possessed.

While Paul confesses that after the manner which they (the Pharisees) called heresy, so worshipped he the God of his Fathers, he adds, Believing all things which are written in the law and the Prophets. Now what is written in the law? Answer, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, &c.—and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. And what is written in the Prophets? Peter, speaking of Jesus, says, in Acts iii 21. "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." Paul then believed that the law of God required that all men should love their Heavenly Father with all their hearts, and their neighbors as themselves. And he also believed that according to the writings of the prophets; though man had violated this law and in their own imaginations had formed up systems contrary to the divine testimony, all things would be restored to their primitive state of holiness and happiness fulfilling the law of God by walking in the path of obedience. This belief of the apostle was called *heresy* by the Pha-

risees, and is now called heresy by Elder Hull and his church. for Deacon Green believes that the law of God requires that every rational intelligent being should love God with all their heart and their neighbors as themselves; and that this law will never be fulfilled until all men are brought to love God, and one another. He also believes with Paul, what is written in the Prophets, that all the ends of the world shall remember and return unto the Lord, and that all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him. That Jesus shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. That he shall destroy the works of the Devil; finish sin, make an end of transgression, make reconciliation for iniquity and bring in an everlasting righteousness. For holding to those glorious and scriptural truths the Deacon has been excommunicated from the Baptist Church in Berlin.

The Elder says, the scriptures fully prove future punishment. He has not been careful to define what he means by the expression *future punishment*. Punishment as the consequence of sin is *future*; but not more so than sin itself—So long as men sin, they will be punished both in the present and future time, but no longer. If the Elder means by future punishment, punishment inflicted in another world, or state of existence for crimes committed in this, and that this punishment is endless, we deny the fact that the scriptures prove any such thing, at least we have never been able with all our diligence in examining the scriptures to find this proof. The Elder has attempted to furnish this proof, and has presented the Deacon with a few passages of scripture as fully to the point. The first is Mark iii 29. "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost has never forgiveness but is in danger of eternal damnation." The reader is referred to a parallel passage in Matthew xii. 32. "And whosoever speaketh a word against the son of man it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world neither in the world to come." Both these writers Matthew and Mark intend to express the same thing, although they vary in the phraseology. We are sensible that Elder Hull and the whole body of believers in endless misery lay much stress on the phrase "this world, and that which is to come" and the expression "in danger of eternal damnation." But the learned know that the word rendered "WORLD" in Mat. xii. 32, is *aion*, the same that is translated, forever—everlasting, eternal, age, &c. The literal signification of *aion*, is, according to Parkhurst, "an age, period, or periodical dispensation of Divine Providence. The Jewish, or age under the Mosaic law—The age under the Messiah. For the correctness of the two last significations of the word, we were referred, on the authority of WHITBY, DODDRIDGE, MCKNIGHT, and others to

Mat. xxiv. 3 xxviii. 24. and xii. 32 the text under consideration. This passage then ought to have been translated thus. 'But whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age, neither in the AGE to come.' This reading renders it easy to be understood that those who committed that sin, should not be forgiven in the AGE that then was, that is, the Jewish age or dispensation which was soon to come to an end; neither should they be forgiven in the AGE to come, or gospel dispensation which was particularly designed for the Gentiles. But Paul mentions that when the fullness of the Gentiles shall become in, then all Israel shall be saved, 'for there shall go forth out Sion the deliverer who shall turn ungodliness away from Jacob,' see Rom. xi.—The expression in Mark appears to be more relied on by the Elder, in proof of endless misery than that in Matthew. 'But is in danger of eternal damnation.' The word *eternal* in this text, is from the same word in the Greek, rendered *world* in Mat xii. 32—and ought to be translated AGE. The word *damnation* is from the Greek word *Krīma*, which signifies 'judgement, judicial trial, sentence of punishment, condemnation, damnation, execution of judgement, punishment, &c.' Hence this passage might with propriety, and ought to have been rendered 'is in danger of an AGE of punishment.' For this translation we have good authority, and every candid mind will readily discover its propriety when they notice that the Saviour was addressing himself exclusively to the Jews, and closes his address to them by saying, 'because they said, he hath an unclean spirit.' That is, the Jews, attributing the works which Jesus did to the Devil, blasphemed against the Holy Ghost, rejected the evidences which Jesus gave of his divine mission and of the truth of the christian religion. They were, therefore, left to wander in judicial blindness and darkness, until the fullness of the Gentiles should be come in, which is expressed by the phrase, "*age of punishment.*"

Should the Elder not be satisfied with the above illustration of the text, we invite his attention to the following reflections. The doctrine of future unmerciful punishment is predicated on the notion that sin is infinite in its nature and consequences, being committed against an infinite God. This being the case, if it can be proved that sin is not infinite in its nature and consequences, the doctrine of endless misery built upon it falls to the ground. We will not stop to argue that a finite being cannot perform any act that will be infinite in its consequence, but will proceed to notice that if sin is *infinite*, there can be no degrees of sin, a sinful thought engendered in the mind will render a man as guilty as the commission of the most high handed crime that ever was perpetrated by man, and the refusing to give a cup of cold water equal in criminality to the

murder of a fellow being. We say once more that if sin is infinite there can be no grades, degrees or shades of difference in sin. In introducing this sin against the Holy Ghost, we have the following remarkable declaration—'All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.' The expression, 'all manner of sin' indicates that there are various kinds of sin, and of course of different degrees of turpitude. All manner of sin shall be forgiven. Here notice, it is not said that all manner of sin and blasphemy *may* be forgiven, but *SHALL* be forgiven; the declaration is positive. According to this divine testimony then, should the doctrine of endless misery be true, none but those who commit the sin against the Holy Ghost, will be the subjects of it; for all other sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven. But why this great difference made, that all sins should be forgiven but this? because the sin against the Holy Ghost is more heinous and of greater turpitude than all other sins. Then it is very evident that there are degrees in sin, if not, one sin could not be greater than another; and if there are degrees in sin, then sin is not infinite in its nature and consequences, as their can be no degrees of comparison with that which is infinite; and as sin is not infinite the punishment to those who sin against the Holy Ghost cannot be endless.

For an explanation of 2 Thessalonians i. 9. We refer the reader to the fourth and fifth numbers of the Messenger where they will find it fully explained. The Elder refers us to Luke xvi. "Where," he says, "it is evident beyond a doubt, that the rich man was in torment after death." This story of the rich man is considered by the judicious and candid as a parable. It is so called by the translators. "A parable, is a similitude; a relation under which something else is figured." If this is a parable, the relation is not to be considered as a matter of fact, if it is a fact we have nothing to do with it, as it is used to *figure* out something else, and it is the thing prefigured only, with which we have any concern. The advocates for endless misery are at a loss what to do with this parable. Sometimes they call it a parable, at other times a literal fact. When neither of these will do, it is partly one and partly the other, and thus they bend and twist the account until, with them, it means every thing or nothing as it suits the imagination. This parable we will notice in some future number, just observing, for the satisfaction of the Elder and his church, that if they insist upon this being a relation of matter of fact, that there was in reality a rich man who died and went to a local place called Hell; and a beggar who died and was carried literally into Abrahams bosom; they must also believe that Father Abraham resides near this dreadful Hell, the gulf only separating, so contiguous that those in Abra-

ham's bosom and those in hell can see and converse with each other. They must also believe that the relationship of Father and Son exists between Abraham and those in Hell, whom he freely acknowledges as his sons, and that with the damned in hell there exists a benevolent, merciful, and anxious desire that others may be preserved from this dreadful abode. If this be the feeling of the damned, how much better hearts they must have than the saints in heaven, who, according to some theories, will rejoice as they behold the smoke of the torment of the damned, ascend from the bottomless pit. In addition to the foregoing, they must believe that the rich man went to hell for no other reason, for none other is given, than because he was rich and enjoyed the good things of this life and that the beggar was carried to heaven, not for any act of righteousness which he had done, or for any moral goodness which he possessed, but merely because he was poor and miserable in this life. Abraham says, "Son remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." These are the only reasons given why they are thus situated.

The Elder notices some parts of passages in the book of Revelations and from them endeavors to present us with the closing scene of the great DRAMA when all the purposes of God shall be accomplished, the existence of man on this terrestrial globe forever closed, and an eternity commenced with all the rational offspring of God. At this closing scene the Elder supposes that there will be some saints and some sinners. That there will be an eternal separation, and that a voice, the voice of God will proclaim, "Let him that is unjust be unjust still and he that is filthy let him be filthy still, &c. &c." "It is unfortunate for the Elder that he should believe so differently from the Apostles of the Lamb. He and Paul are quite at variance on this point. When the Apostle was called upon to defend the doctrine of the resurrection against the attacks of the Sadducees, having predicated the resurrection on the fact, that Jesus had arisen from the dead, he leads the mind to a contemplation of the closing scene of the great drama of mortal life and the commencement of eternal felicity; but he describes it entirely different from Elder Hull. See 2 Cor. xv. 24. "Then cometh the end." Observe kind reader what he says, "*then cometh the end.*" When will this end come? Notice "When he (that is Jesus) shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority, and power. For he must reign, until he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things

under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son himself be subject unto him who did put all things under him, that God may be all in all." This end, or closing scene according to the Apostle will not come until Christ shall have subdued all things unto himself, nor will he deliver up the mediatorial kingdom until he hath put down all rule, authority and power, and destroyed the last enemy, DEATH, that God may be ALL in ALL. Can Elder Hull believe that when all things are subdued to Christ, and God ALL in ALL, death swallowed up in victory and all intelligent beings raised incorruptible and immortal, that there will remain any filthy, unjust, and unholy beings among them? Surely he cannot. Then he does not believe Paul's testimony who gives us a closing scene so entirely different from the Elder. While one is awful beyond expression, chilling to the heart and filling it with doubt and despair, the other is most divinely glorious, cheering to the soul, animating to the mind, displaying the infinite goodness of Almighty God, and the glorious triumphs of the Redeemer in the full accomplishment of the work the Father sent him to do, even to save that which was lost, and raise it to glory.

The letter of excommunication, closes with advice on the part of the church that the Deacon would no longer advocate the doctrine which the enemy preached to our first parents in the garden (viz.) that they should not die. Here we find Mr. Haynes again. But for him how much our clergy would have lost! Our first parents says the Elder, "were as confident they were right, that the doctrine was true, as you are, that there will be no future punishment for the wicked, and we have no doubt you will be as awfully disappointed as they were, though we hope not so fatal to you as it was to them." We trust the church in Berlin are willing that men should pursue and embrace those religious sentiments which they conscientiously believe to be right. They surely would not use that tyrannical and arbitrary power which compels men to play the hypocrite, and profess to believe what they do not. If they believed Deacon Green to be in an error it was their duty to admonish him and endeavor to convince him of his error. If they could not convince him from the divine testimony that he was wrong, and he still in honesty of heart conscientiously believed he was right in confiding in the eternal unchanging mercy and love of God, believing that Jesus will accomplish the work of redemption, and that all punishment will be disciplinary and tend to the good of the punished it was their duty to leave him with God the Father of mercies, granting him their prayers, their friendship and their love, and imitate the Lord Jesus Christ who said, "if any man hear my words and believe them not I judge him not, for I came not to judge the world but to save the world." The church express a hope that the Deacon's belief in the goodness of God, will not prove as fatal to him, as the belief of our first parents was to them. Is it possible that they consider that what our first parents believed, and what Universalists believe is the same thing. If so will they be so good as to show us the similarity between believing that "men will not surely die"—and believing that men die, and all will die so surely as they sin, but that they will be raised from death by the Holy Spirit of God, & that as sin has reigned unto death, even so shall grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. There is something singular in the hope expressed that the Deacon's belief will not prove as fatal to him as the belief of our first parents did to them. Does the Elder believe that our first parents are burning in hell and will there continue through all eternity. If so, will he give us the evidence he has for thus believing, if he does not, will he inform us what is meant by that hope.

MARRIED,

AN Thursday evening last, by the Rev. Mr. Carrique, Mr. SAMUEL HEATH, jr. to Miss REBECCA RACE, both of this city.